2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Upper Burma
Lower Burma

entirely dispensed with. If the parents of both houses are agreeable, the contracting parties get married with most ardent lover-like rapidity. The age, too, has become very much younger. Most lads get married when they are eighteen or nineteen; thirteen or fourteen is a common age for the girls. Runaway marriages are common enough, and though the parents may be angry, they are usually too easy-going and indolent to take any energetic action in the matter, and let the couple find out their mistake and come and ask for pardon and a house to live in, which is seldom refused. Occasionally in Lower Burma a stern father demands that they shall be separated until the lad has got a situation for himself, but this is ordinarily little more than a mere form of speech. In Upper Burma, where food is scarce and working hands more valuable, the husband is brought to the girl's parents' house and made to do his share towards supporting the household.

The preliminary courting is naturally conducted in the old fashion, best known to those who have had experience of their own in such matters. The parties meet at pwès, the girl perhaps selling cheroots, fried garlic, le'pet, and what not, and therefore being readily accessible to any swain. It must not be supposed that keeping a stall is regarded as anything derogatory. Numbers of perfectly well-to-do women set them up regularly; some even have daily work in the bazaars, and very often a girl commences occupations of the kind with the view of attracting the young men and securing a husband. Then there are meetings at pagoda feasts, in the zayats and at friends' houses, so that there are plenty of chances of introduction to eligible swains, even without calling in the assistance of the aungthwè. This functionary makes it a regular occupation to know all the attractions, physical and sordid, of all the young women in the place, and for a small consideration, or sometimes merely for love of his trade, brings young couples together and arranges places of meeting for them. He is, of course, most useful where an impecunious youth aspires to the hand of a rich merchant's or high official's daughter. He manages an introduction in a roundabout way to avoid rousing suspicions, praises his client's appearance and

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

lata for the original flavoured earth, and of Thale rice for the leguminous creeper, desire arose among them, and four of the men took the four women to wife. The fifth man naturally resented being left compulsorily single, and pelted the happy couples with stones on their marriage night. Sympathy with the feelings of this archetypal bachelor has perpetuated the stone-throwing by the lu-byos down to the present day, and if there is no dearth of eligible spinsters in our times, the lonely bachelor may be allowed to express his envy of his friend's bliss without being accused of anything but gross cupidity.

After marriage the couple almost always live for two or three years in the house of the bride's parents, the son-in-law becoming one of the family and contributing to its support. Setting up a separate establishment, even in Rangoon, where the young husband is a clerk in an English office, is looked upon with disfavour as a piece of pride and ostentation. If the girl is an only daughter, she and her husband stay on till the old people die.

Polygamy is recognised and permitted, but practically does not exist now in British territory. A man with more than one wife becomes a subject of common talk, and a native official now living is well known all through the delta as the myo-ok with twenty wives. In native territory the right to have several wives was equally little used in practice. Many of the high officials who travelled about over large districts had wives in almost all the towns they visited —a custom in great measure induced by the rule which provided that the mayā-gyi, the chief wife, had to be left in Mandalay as a hostage for the fidelity of the official. But the great bulk of the people are, and always have been, monogamous. King Mindôn had fifty-three recognised *wives*, of whom thirty-seven survived him. His children numbered one hundred and ten, of whom upwards of fifty survived him. Besides the wives, like Solomon, he had numerous concubines. So, indeed, have many lesser people.

The forbidden degrees are few. Marriages with mother, daughter, sister, and half-sister, aunt, grandmother, and granddaughter, are forbidden, but none else. A son may marry his stepmother; it is expressly mentioned in the

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

III

SOCIAL GROUPS AND RELATIONS

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In this section we describe the patterns of kinship and interpersonal relations, the beliefs and customs pertaining to the life cycle of the individual associations, and intergroup relations.*

Kinship

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The kinship system reflects very clearly the bilateral family structure in the absence of terminological differentiation on the basis of the sex of the connecting relative. The other outstanding characteristic is the recognition at many points of relative age. For each generation a distinct set of kinship terms is employed. On the speaker's (ego's) generation, all cousins are merged with siblings, the terms being differentiated, however, according to relative age. In the first ascending generation, the parents' siblings are differentiated according to the degree of age relative to the parent. In the first descending generation the factor of relative age loses significance; sex is the sole basis of differentiation of kinship terms, except for separate terms to distinguish the speaker's own children from others. On successive descending generations sex distinction is absent and all relatives of a given generation are subsumed under a single kinship term.

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Relative age is the all-important hub upon which the wheel of village social life revolves. Reference to one's elders is reflected in such customs as carrying objects for them, refraining from sitting with one's head higher than those of elders, and avoiding postures in which the feet are extended towards such persons.

Beyond such matters of etiquette, the importance of age is even more fundamentally demonstrated in the showing of obeisance to one's elders. This is done on all the important ceremonial occasions. Four such occasions are regarded as obligatory times for paying one's respects. These are the beginning and the end of Wasa (sometimes called the Buddhist 'Lent'), a period of about three months, roughly from mid-July to mid-October; the New Year; and the harvest. Respect is paid to all of one's elders in the parental generation and above. A visit is made at which an offering, valuable or symbolic, is brought and the elder's blessings are received.

Interpersonal Relations

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Husband and Wife. The household is normally composed of husband and wife and their offspring. It is a bilateral, limited type of family structure, contrasting markedly with the patrilineal extended Chinese family and the joint family of India. Unlike the position of the wife in the traditional Chinese and Indian family systems, that of the Burmese wife is not one of an outsider living in a group dominated by her husband's relatives. Where a married couple reside is a matter of choice and is decided very largely on the basis of economic opportunity. When there is such opportunity in the village for an outsider who marries a girl of Tadagale, he is urged to establish their residence there, but there is no particular pressure or feeling about the

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*The material on kinship and the life cycle, with certain changes, was published under the title "Burmese Kinship and the Life Cycle: an Outline" in Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, vol 7, no 4, 1951, pp. 437-454. The reader interested in the technical details of the kinship terms and a diagrammatic presentation of the kinship system is referred to that article. The author wishes to express his thanks to Mi Mi Khaing for valuable assistance in the compilation and analysis of the material on this aspect of the culture.

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14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

591 matter. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of
101 orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by visits from time to
582 time. People from Tadagale seldom marry individuals from villages that are very distant. The structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and rule domination in the family.

562 Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the historic resultant of two patterns of thought. One is the apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of property in the event of divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and the absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese concepts: whatever ideas of male superiority exist stem from Buddhist ideas of reincarnation, it being assumed that only a man can attain reincarnation.

593 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of a deferential attitude towards males, are expected of a wife. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by village wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of malice by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

837 Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is a tendency towards a double standard of sexual conduct. A husband who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a philandering husband, on the other hand, will usually do no more than display hurt feelings for a brief period; rarely will she separate from her husband, especially if they have children.

593 Siblings. It is the duty of the younger to show deference to the elder. This pertains to the order of serving food, fetching and carrying things, and even the arrangement of sleeping mats -- a younger sibling should never sleep with his feet extended towards an elder sibling. Upon the death of a parent, the eldest child of the same sex assumes that parent's socio-economic role in the family.

Father and Daughter. Consistent with the age principle, it is a daughter's duty to be obedient and to wait upon her father. Once an unmarried daughter passes the age of puberty, her father is expected to lead a circumspect
[581] and moral life more than ever before. Any deviant sexual behavior or drunkenness on his part reflects upon his daughter and detracts from her marital chances.

Mother and Son. Although a son owes obedience to his mother, her claim upon him in this regard is tempered by the fact that, in Burmese Buddhist

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

marriage, which is with most people a ceremony performed in full daylight with all accessories of display, is with the Burmese generally a secret. Two or three friends, perhaps, will be called quietly to the house, and the man and the woman will eat together, and thus become husband and wife. Then they will separate again, and not for several days, or even weeks perhaps, will it be known that they are married; for it is seldom that they can set up house for themselves just at once. Often they will marry and live apart for a time with their parents. Sometimes they will go and live together with the man's parents, but more usually with the girl's mother. Then after a time, when they have by their exertions made a little money, they build a house and go to live there; but sometimes they will live on with the girl's parents for years.

A girl does not change her name when she marries, nor does she wear any sign of marriage, such as a ring. Her name is always the same, and there is nothing to a stranger to denote whether she be married or not, or whose wife she is; and she keeps her property as her own. Marriage does not confer upon the husband any power over his wife's property, either what she brings with her, what she earns, or what she inherits subsequently; it all remains her own, as does his remain his own. But usually property acquired after marriage is held jointly. You will inquire, for instance, who is the owner of this garden, and be told Maung Han, Ma Shwè, the former being the husband's name and the latter the wife's. Both names are used very frequently in business and in legal proceedings, and indeed it is

HOME

Home is Pathwe

Home is the village of Pathwe, Pantanaw Township, Maubin district, Lower Burma. It is located on one of the countless small streams of the Lower Irrawaddy estuary about ninety miles west of Rangoon. The country is a flat alluvium plain dissected by myriads of streams and canals. The monotony of marshy plains is relieved by occasional clumps of trees and tall reeds which flank the streams. The land is a result of depositions of silts from upstream by the Irrawaddy river and its tributaries - a process which is going on today as Lower Burma extends into the bays of Bengal and Martaban. When asked how long his family had lived in the village of Pathwe, U Myaing replied :

"My parents were born here and their parents before them and their's before them - as far back as we can remember."

The village of Pathwe occupies the adjacent banks of three streams at the point where they join.

The larger town of Pantanaw is located some three miles upstream. The section U Myaing lives in is called YWA-GYI-BET (Big-village-side) and is the main residential area of Pathwe. Directly across the stream, which is about 200 feet wide at this point, are YWA-LAY-BET (small-village-side) and PAYA-GYI-DAUNT (Big-pagoda-corner).

YWA-GYI-BET consists of four rows of houses placed 200 feet apart parallel to the main branch of the stream. The rows consist of about fifty houses each and are separated by brick or earth roads. The brick road is raised about three feet to form a passageway in time of floods. Communal lavatories flank both sides of the village rows and the ones on the side of the river have been located about 60 or 70 feet back from the edge of the river "in order not to pollute the water." The lavatories in the village differ from one another, in that some of them are in the house itself and others are outside by a small passageway connected to the house. The houses with lavatories in them depend on the water to carry away the droppings in the rainy season.

cloth, small enough to keep mosquitos out. The other kind was made of plain cloth to keep out the smallest insects. The nets are rectangular for a single bed, square for a double. They are suspended over the bed on a wooden framework and tucked under the mattress. Pathwa: three were used by the family and two kept in reserve. Each lasted 4 or 5 years. The reserve nets cost Rs. 60/- each, the others Rs. 40/- or 45/- each. Camp: one old one was brought from Pathwa, this is used by U Myaing and his wife. The rest of the family have none. Two are desired.

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TA-BYET-SHE, broom: The hand broom is used to brush out dust and dirt from the floor of the house. It is about 2 feet long, 2 inches in diameter and consists of bent over bunches of stiff reeds bound at the top by a more flexible reed strip. The one used in camp cost 12 annas in Rangoon.

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Burmese Concepts about the Home.

The following Burmese ideas about the home were secured mainly from Ko Maung Than, my research assistant.

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The Burmese regard the KIN-YAR (home place) with great love, and as the most essential feature of life. The head of a family will frequently admonish: "My young ones let us remain with our nest intact and our eggs uncracked", this is also a common prayer. The ideal is to preserve the family home with necessary repairs in its original form. Wooden (teak) houses are preferred to bamboo. The husband and wife are partners in the ownership of the home which they start at marriage. Indeed, the word for "marriage" KIN-DAUNG-PYU (Home-separately-build) emphasizes the importance of building a home upon starting a family. In villages the mother and children spend almost all of their time in and around the home. Since the Burmese are especially sedentary, short journeys being unusual and infrequent events, the house is the spot where he lives and dies. It is furthermore his "castle" and place of security within which he is "ruler".

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Each house is under the direct protection of MIN MAHA-GIRI one of the 37 major nats of Burma. He controls the fortunes of the family and in return is revered. A coconut, the symbol of MIN-

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23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

A Li Southeast Asia
Burmese AP4

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

593 husband's kinfolk. Post-marital residence is independent and is decided very
[591] largely on the basis of economic opportunity. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the
[574] chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by
[582] visits from time to time; such marriages seldom unite persons from villages that are very far apart. The very structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and male domination.

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593 trast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the resultant historically of two patterns of thought. One is an apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheri-
[428] tance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of
[586] property upon divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and an absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from
[177] the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese conceptions: whatever
[775] ideas of male superiority exist in Burmese life stem from Buddhist notions of reincarnation. Although Buddha never expressed himself explicitly on the matter, it is taken for granted that only a male can attain Nirvana, since Gautama Buddha, who attained that state, was a male.

462 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as
592 the preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children, very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

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784 of the female partner in marriage. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by Burmese wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of spite by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

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25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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151. THE IDEAL AND THE REAL

They are generally condoned. Burmans do not wait to make money in order to marry, but marry in order to make money. Girls marry from the age of about twenty, and men about twenty-five. The marriage is a quiet affair. A day is fixed, when the lad and his parents repair to the home of the girl, whither some of the elders of the village (*lûdyî*) have been invited for witness. The father of the lad addresses the parents of the girl in this wise: "Seeing that our children love each other, we pray you let your daughter be as our daughter and our son as your son" (*ekkau*). The girl's parents express their pleasure and approval, and according to one usage, the couple thereupon join hands (*letthat*), which means marriage; but the joining-of-hands is as a rule figurative. After this the lad goes and fetches his bedding, curtain, and clothes and places them in the house in token of reception into the family. In conclusion, the parties and the witnesses eat pickled tea together. When one or both parties are strangers in the place, friends undertake the part of parents and the elders make inquiries as to blood-relationship and pre-existing ties. Kinship closer than first-cousin and the corresponding step-relationships are respected—except by royalty (p. 170). Sometimes marriages are of a more festive description (*mingala*). Astrologers are called in and company entertained as at the *nâkauk mingala*. Other unions, again, are by mere mutual agreement, without formalities of any kind. By time-honoured custom the lads of the village claim the right to pelt the house of the new-married pair at night (*ge-gyit*), and it is usual to buy them off. New couples mostly start life in

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162. TATTOOING (TOGWIN, *ante* p. 13).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

153. THE CHALLENGE
(see p. 177).

the young wife's home, the lad working for her parents. As family comes and other daughters marry, the elder pairs are established in houses of their own. Married people are designated *ein-daung*—householders. Marriage makes no difference in the names and their prefixes. Everyone marries in Burma; the census of 1891 gave 1,306,722 husbands to 1,307,292 wives. The same census gave 102 females to 100 males of the Burman (so classed as Buddhist) population. (In Burma prostitution is confined to the large towns.)

A family of seven is considered large. The average number of house-occupants is 5·5. The cost of living in a Burman village household is 100 to 200 Rs. a year. In the towns the well-to-do spend 600 to 1000 Rs. and more, and at the present day keep a servant or two for the rough work, generally natives of India. Such accumulations of wealth as are made by individuals in India and other countries with a plutocracy and a proletariate are not paralleled among the Burmans. Nevertheless individuals amass tens of thousands of rupees, which for the most part they spend on works of religious merit. Monogamy is the received and almost universal practice in Burma. Second-wives are taken by a proportion of the officials and men of wealth. Hence it comes that the Burmans wonder more at the moderation of Europeans than at such license as they indulge. This license is not nearly so great as in India, but it is more open, corresponding to the higher status of the women of Burma, and thus it provokes more scandal in comparison. Unions of this sort among the Burmans are merely by mutual consent. A separate establishment in a different quarter of the town is maintained for the second wife or concubine (*maya-ngè*). Her children are under no disability, but she is not acknowledged by the first, and generally older, wife (*mayaji*), whose husband's love she is said to have stolen.

154. AN "ORIGINAL"